(b) if so, the reasons for such loss and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. While Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) have suffered loss for the first quarter and the third quarter of the financial year 2005-06, they have registered profit during the second quarter of the year. On the other hand, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) have suffered loss during the first three quarters, *i.e.* April—December, 2005.

(b) Losses suffered by the companies are mainly attributable to huge under-realistion on sale of Motor Spirit (petrol), High Speed Diesel (diesel), Superior Kerosene Oil (kerosene) (for public distribution system) and LPG (domestic), consequent to non-revision in retail selling prices of these products in line with international prices.

Investment in foreign countries in Hydrocarbon Sector

272. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and China took a key step towards enhanced energy cooperation by creating a framework under which their State-owned oil and gas companies can evolve and submit joint bids for acquisition of assets in third countries;

(b) whether the two countries have signed any MoU in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government are currently looking at hydrocarbon assets in more than 50 countries;

(e) whether Government had held talks with any country in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details discussed in the meeting including the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) A Memorandum for Cooperation in the field of oil and natural gas between the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas of the Republic of India was signed on 12.1.2006.

One of the areas of cooperation envisaged in the Memorandum of Cooperation entered into between the two Governments is for the companies of the two countries to undertake joint exploration and production initiatives for oil and natural gas resources in third countries. These include investment opportunities in third countries and submitting of joint bids for equity participation in oil producing fields or exploration acreages as well as participation in upstream and downstream projects.

(d) to (f) In keeping with the objective of Energy Security Section of the National Common Minimum Programme, ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) as well as other national oil companies such as Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOC), Oil India Ltd. (OIL) and Gas Authority of India (GAIL) have been pursuing proposals for acquisition of equity oil abroad as well as oil and gas exploration acreages and producing properties. They have acquired Participating Interests in oil and gas projects located in Vietnam, Sudan, Russia, Iraq, Iran, Myanmar, Libya, Syria, Australia, Ivory Coast, Qatar and Egypt. These companies are aggressively scouting for E&P opportunities in countries such as Venezuela, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Yemen, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Angola, Ecuador etc. in addition to efforts to acquire more assets in the countries where they are operating currently.

Ministerial and official level discussions have been held with number of countries including several littoral states of the Caspian Sea including Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Iran, and understandings/ agreements arrived at or are being perused. The outcome of these would depend upon techno commercial viability, geopolitical environment, etc.